

Why churches can stay open.

On the safety of places of worship, the Government's Task Force on Covid and religious communities stated that the safety restrictions in place control the new variant as well as the original virus.

The key to safety is to maintain 'social distancing'. There is no evidence that places of worship are less safe now, provided that the rules about social distancing, no mingling, ventilation, and keeping the liturgy as short and simple as possible are followed.

The evidence, that there is about the spread of the virus, shows negligible evidence of contact in churches but very significant figures (18.3%) in supermarkets.

The opening of churches is not placing any additional burdens on the NHS and the benefits of an general open church policy should not be lost without evidence which indicates a greater transmission of the virus. Of course, all other matters of Health & Safety are also important, especially with icy mornings and the increased danger of falls.

However do please note that the 'Sunday Obligation' remains suspended by the bishops. So there is no expectation that Catholics should attend Mass on Sundays or other days.

- Many of course do still choose to come to Mass, better to draw on the succour offered by the word of God and the grace and encouragement received in Holy Communion.
- Others want to come to Mass but do well to stay home following advise to shield from all ventures out of the home for health reasons.
- And some will be nervous and stay home because of the current level of new infections, as well as the sometimes treacherous weather and the risks that brings with it.

During the time anyone is not able to come to Mass, there are still opportunities to pray with the parish and pray with the Church.

Morning Prayer

A reminder of the opportunity to join the members of the parish each day (Monday to Saturday) for Morning prayer at 0830.

This simple form of prayer is based on Scripture – psalms and other poetic songs – and is very easy to join in. All are welcome.

The Zoom link is available on the parish website home page. Just click on the link sometime between 8.25 and 8.30 and wait to be 'admitted'.

Rosary

Each Monday evening at 7pm a number of us come together to pray, in turn, one of the sets of the Mysteries. Tomorrow we pray the Joyful Mysteries.

Again, the Zoom link is available on the parish website home page. Just click on the link sometime between 6.55 and 7pm and wait to be 'admitted'.

Prefer quiet prayer alone?

Why not make space for a daily reflection on Scripture?

This is the Year of Mark – you might begin slowly to read your way through Mark's Gospel – the shortest of the four.

Or why not make use of the readings set each week for Sunday Mass? These can be found on the website in the newsletter – link here. And each week of the present lockdown, a written reflection will be published here. Often these will be a version of the Sunday homily preached either by Fr Allen or Deacon John, but sometimes they will come from another source.

Mass on-line?

If you wish to watch Mass online, links to live streamed Masses are available on the parish website.

First Sacraments

Baptism Under the current lockdown we are advised that baptism should be celebrated only in danger of death. However parents who wish to complete preparation during lockdown, so baptism can be quickly arranged once it is again permitted, are invited to contact Fr Allen *before 1st February* so a group Zoom meeting can be arranged.

First Communion Preparation is now underway. Because of the restricted opportunities for children to attend Mass at this time the *celebration* of first Confessions and Communion will, like last year, take place after the Summer. Dates will be confirmed nearer the time. More details have been sent to those enrolled

Confirmation is currently scheduled for 15 May. More details have been sent to those enrolled.

Financial support for the Church: You will appreciate that parish income has been cut right back over the past months, but our bills have not reduced by anything like as much! If you are in a position to help, you might like to consider the following.

- **GIFT AID** allows the Church reclaim tax paid on your offering, to raise a further 25% for the church at no further cost to you.
- **STANDING ORDERS** are a helpful way of making your offering. *Forms for GA and SO are available from Fr Allen or the parish website.*
- **GIFT AID OFFERTORY ENVELOPES** Numbered envelopes are available or those in the Gift Aid scheme who still use the envelopes.



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What's all this about Pope Francis saying "women are now allowed to read at Mass?"

Many of the reports about the Pope's decision to change canon law to allow women to be *instituted as Acolytes and Lectors* have been misleading.

It is not that the Pope is only now giving permission for women to read and minister Holy Communion. As surely all should know, this has long been encouraged in the church, where there is need.

- Proclaiming all the readings at Mass – other than the Gospel reading, which is reserved to deacons and priests (and bishops!) – is a work that *belongs* to lay ministers – women and men
- Assisting the clergy in the distribution of Holy Communion at Mass, has long been a work shared by men and women, where there is need for assistance to ensure the timely and prayerful distribution of Holy Communion. So no change there.

Where there is a change is that now the formal (lay) ministries of lector and acolyte are open to women.

Formerly – and for largely historical reasons – these ministries were only open to men. Consequently, bishops, by and large, as they could not legally institute women to these ministries as well as men would not institute anyone to these ministries – other than those preparing for ordination (!) as it was a canonical requirement.

It was a good decision they made in the circumstances, though it has had the sad consequence of holding back the development of lay liturgical ministry in ways envisaged after Vatican Council II.

These ministries are not just about reading, not just about distributing holy Communion – significant though these things are. Rather they are about a long term commitment to the ministry of Word and Holy Communion. Admission to these ministries requires careful preparation and clear commitment to the service of the Church.

The change does not mean that only those 'instituted' as lector and acolyte will assist at Mass in future, but it should lead to an enriching of parish life through the still more worthy exercise of these ministries to the benefit of all the faithful.

In coming weeks and months we can look forward to formation programmes being put in place to assist people, men and women, to take on these new opportunities to still more profoundly commit themselves to serve the people of God at worship.

Keeping Safe at for Mass

Face coverings: Regulations require members of the congregation, aged 5 and over, to wear face-coverings over their nose and mouth throughout the time we are in church. *If you have an exemption certificate relieving you of this obligation please confirm in advance with Fr Allen, so appropriate seating can be arranged for you (and to safeguard others.)*

Social distancing: Please keep a social distance of 1m from anyone not of your household, . *If someone is already in the bench you choose, please sit in the middle space, and leave any remaining space on the aisle for the next to arrive. Do not make people climb over you to get into the bench.*

Thank you for your cooperation.

MASS DURING THE HEALTH CRISIS

On days when there is no public Mass (because no volunteers for stewarding/cleaning) Fr Allen celebrates Mass 'privately' in the church usually at 0830 .

Sa 16	6pm	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	Luke Gill RIP (Gill)
Su 17	9am 11am		Charles & Agens Sawbridge RIP (Sawbridge) For the parish
M 18	10am		David Woulfe Ints (Foster)
T 19	10am	St Wulstan	John Kirrane RD (Devane)
W 20	10am		Freda Gateley RIP (Ord)
Th 21		St Agnes	
F 22	7pm		Suzanne Rouffiat RD (Cuming)
Sa 23	6pm	Third Sunday in Ordinary Time. Sunday of the Word of God	Luke Gill RIP (Gill)
Su 24	9am 11am		Charles & Agens Sawbridge RIP (Sawbridge) For the parish

Confessions COVID restrictions prevent confessions being heard in the church, or indoors. However, if you wish to celebrate Reconciliation please contact Fr Allen who will be happy to arrange a time and place (outdoors) to celebrate this sacrament of mercy with you.

Please pray for sick parishioners including Betty Barker, Lyn Hunt; Joan James; Thomas Stevenson; Lea Burke. Please pray for Fr Patrick Joyce , Ann Jordan and John O'Sullivan who died recently and for Doris Johnson, Tery Devenney, Kathleen Cecil and all whose anniversaries occur at this time. **Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may they rest in peace.**

Mass of the **2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time**

The Introductory Rites

The Introductory Rites help the faithful to come together as one, establish communion and prepare themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

The Penitential Act

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

The Liturgy of the Word

Hearing the word proclaimed in worship, the faithful again enter into the unending dialogue between God and the people of the covenant shared in Christ, a dialogue sealed as we share the Eucharistic food and drink. The proclamation of the word is essential to the Mass

A brief time of quiet after the readings allows those present to take the word of God to heart and begin to prepare a prayerful response to what we have heard.

1 Samuel 3:3-10,19

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ He answered, ‘Here I am.’ Then he ran to Eli and said, ‘Here I am, since you called me.’ Eli said, ‘I did not call. Go back and lie down.’ So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am, since you called me.’ He replied, ‘I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.’ Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am, since you called me.’ Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, ‘Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”’ So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Samuel answered, ‘Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.’

Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.

Psalm 39(40):2,4,7-10

I waited, I waited for the Lord
and he stooped down to me;
he heard my cry.
He put a new song into my mouth,
praise of our God.

You do not ask for sacrifice and offerings,
but an open ear.
You do not ask for holocaust and victim.
Instead, here am I.

In the scroll of the book it stands written
that I should do your will.
My God, I delight in your law
in the depth of my heart.

Your justice I have proclaimed
in the great assembly.
My lips I have not sealed;
you know it, O Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:13-15,17-20

The body is not meant for fornication: it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too.

You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ; do you think I can take parts of Christ’s body and join them to the body of a prostitute? Never! But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life. **Alleluia!**

John 1:35-42

As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, ‘Look, there is the lamb of God.’ Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, ‘What do you want?’ They answered, ‘Rabbi,’ – which means Teacher – ‘where do you live?’ ‘Come and see’ he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. It was about the tenth hour.

One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother

of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, ‘You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas’ – meaning Rock.

Homily

Prayer of the Faithful (omitted at the Bishop’s request)

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin Mary, all bow.

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come
to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.
Amen.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life. It is the vital centre of all that the Church is and does, because at its heart is the real presence of the crucified, risen and glorified Lord, continuing and making available his saving work among us.

The Offertory

There is no offertory collection at this time. Instead, you are invited to place your offerings in the basket at the entrance to the church as you arrive, or as you leave.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer, the centre and summit of the entire celebration is a memorial proclamation of praise and thanksgiving for God’s work of salvation, a proclamation in which the Body and Blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit and the people are joined to Christ in offering his Sacrifice to the Father

The Preface Dialogue

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and just.

Sanctus

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

The mystery of faith.

Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

THE COMMUNION RITE

Eating and drinking together of the Lord’s Body and Blood in a Paschal meal is the culmination of the Eucharist. The themes underlying these rites are mutual love and reconciliation. These are the condition and the fruit of worthy communion and the unity of the many in the One.

The Lord’s Prayer

Invitation to Communion

Please wait in your pew until it is time to move forward to the minister for Holy Communion, always aware of the regulations on social distancing in the orderly queue.

As you approach the minister, please do so with arms at “full stretch” to keep a good distance between you.

Communion will be given silently, and in the hand only. (Your hands - palms upwards, one of top of the other - should be extended as flatly as possible.)

Prayer after Communion

The Concluding Rites

The brief Concluding Rite sends the people forth to put into effect in their daily lives the Mystery of Christ’s Death and Resurrection and the unity in Christ which they have celebrated. Their mission is to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

Blessing and Dismissal

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Preparing for Mass

Reflections on readings and prayers from next Sunday’s Mass are posted daily on the parish Blog (Weds to Sun). *Spending time with the readings and prayers before Mass is a good way of helping our time at Mass to be more fruitful.*

Families with children in primary school are strongly urged to make use of the Wednesday Word to prepare as a family. wednesdayword.org/parish/resources.htm

New on Parish Blog for 2021

Weekly mini-essays exploring the Eucharist. Origins and influences on the Mass; exploring particular prayers; and looking at how we celebrate - and how we might celebrate more fruitfully....

www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com